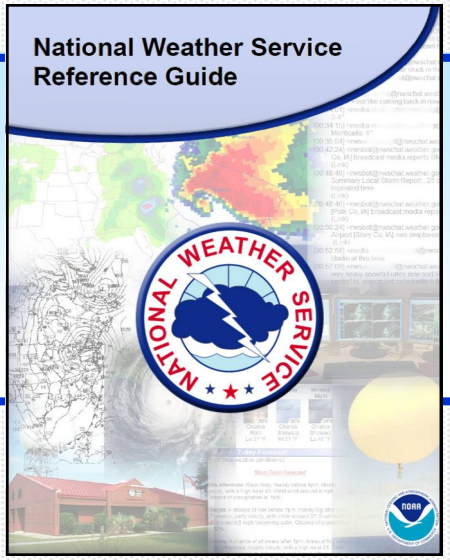


6. Website Navigation

Table of Contents

Weather.gov	2
Point-and-Click	3
Hourly Weather Graph	3
Observations	4
Radar	4
Graphical Forecast	5
Area Forecast Discussion	5
Climate Information	6
Rivers and Lakes	7
Map Display Order	8

Click on description to go directly to the page.

6. Website Navigation

The NWS website is one of the most powerful tools available to disseminate information to NWS partners and the public. An immense amount of information can be found on the website; the trick is in knowing where to find it. This section will point out some of the most requested information from the sites.

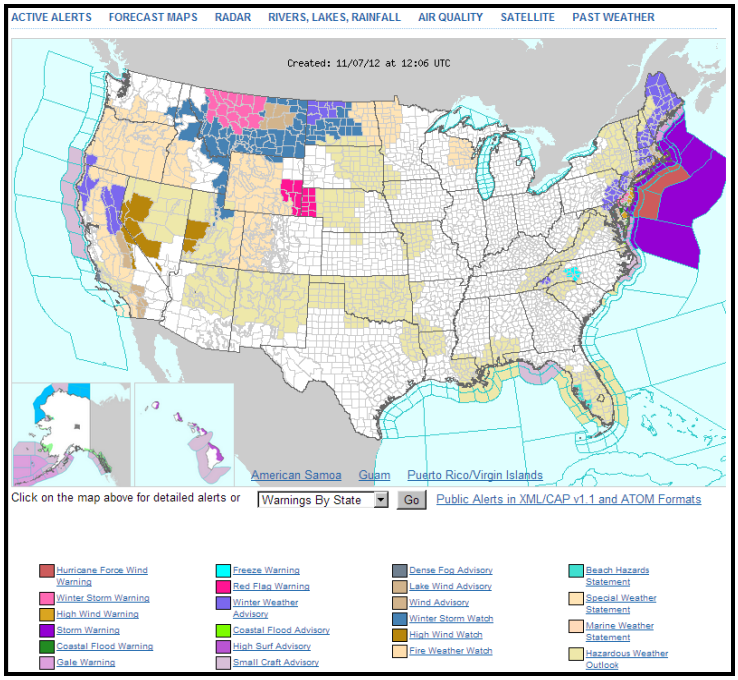
WWW.WEATHER.GOV or MOBILE.WEATHER.GOV

NWS websites provide a great deal of useful information for anyone looking for national and local weather data.

The information in the following pages will describe the www.weather.gov website. A slimmed down version is available for mobile use, but is different from the information shown here.

The main NWS website has national information including graphical forecasts, surface maps, national radar and plenty of other information.

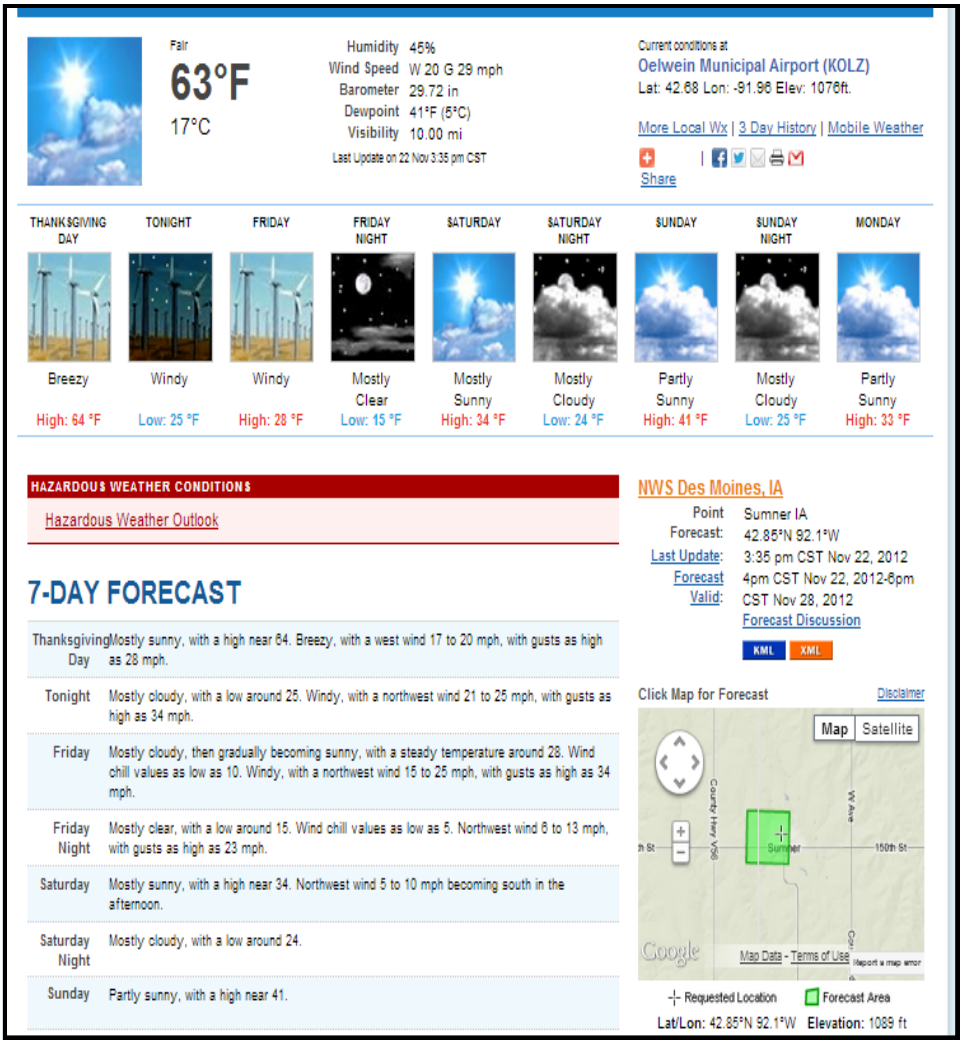
Local office websites are accessible from this page by clicking an area on the map. Local websites are also available by using the www.weather.gov address followed by / and either the office identifier, or for most sites, the name of a major city in the county warning area.



While there are some differences between offices in different parts of the country, all office have many of the same items on the main page, including a clickable map for the "point-and-click" forecast and the local radar. They also have a menu on the left for more information. Offices outside of the conterminous

The area map on every site is color coded for any headline or pertinent weather information for each county. In this example, the tan color represents hazardous weather outlooks that are in effect for the highlighted counties. See: Display Organization on Page 8.

Also note at the top of many sites are news stories that can provide additional information on current weather and water issues, past events and summaries or other useful detail.



Point-and-Click Forecast

Clicking a location on the map from a local office page or typing in a city name or zip code will bring up the **point-and-click forecast** for the specific location selected. This forecast is a detailed text and graphic forecast for a 2.5 or 5km block, including the exact point selected.

Current conditions for the closest observing station are at the top of this page...along with a link for "More Local Wx" (a list of nearby sites and their conditions), the 3-day observation history for the site and a link for the mobile website.

Next is a quick view of the forecast with icon displays of the forecasted weather condition for each period.

Below this on the left will be a list of any active headlines or other non-routine products for the location. In addition, more detailed forecast information is available.

All forecast products found on the website are based on a daytime period of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and nighttime period of 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

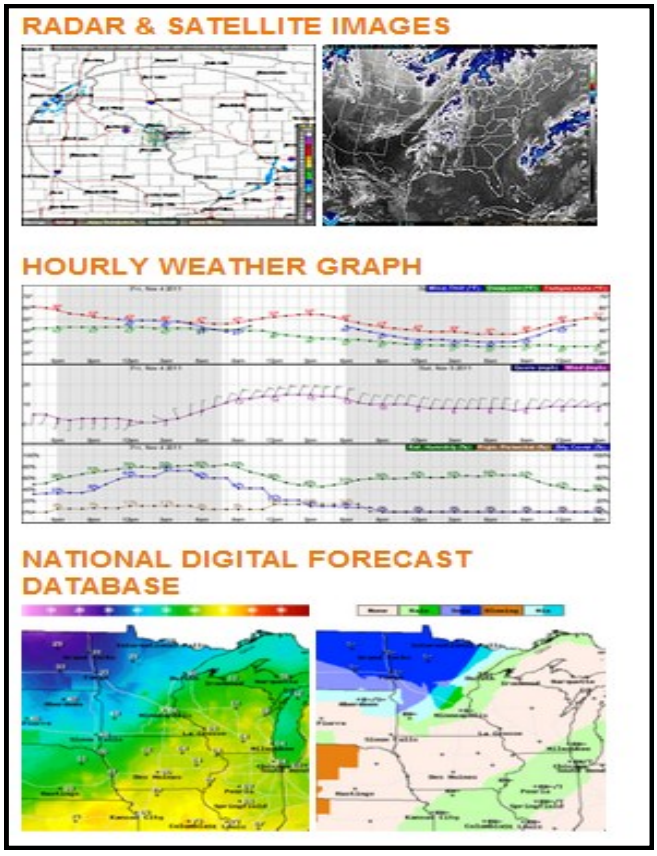
Farther down the page on the right are thumbnail images for radar and satellite, the hourly weather graph and the digital forecast. The Radar and Satellite images show current and recent past conditions with loops available.

Hourly Weather Graph

The hourly weather graph is another view of the forecast information that gives the user more detail of the expected conditions

This graph gives detailed hour-by-hour information of each parameter in the forecast. The user can customize the view by turning certain parameters on and off, and can change the time period of the forecast view.

The final images here are for digital forecast graphics. These will be explained a bit later in this section.



3-Day History

From the point-and-click forecast page, just below the current conditions is a link to the 3 -day observation history for the nearest site.

The 3-day history page lists all regular observations, decoded into plain language. Wind, visibility, weather, sky condition, temperature, dew point, altimeter and sea level pressure are all listed. In addition, the 6-hour maximum and minimum temperatures are listed. Some stations will also report the amount of liquid precipitation that fell during the time period. In general, NWS ASOS (automated surface observing stations) will report precipitation, and privately or state owned AWOS (automated weather observing stations) will not.

Some regions are transitioning to a new version of this page with graphs, but the information is all the same.

www.srh.noaa.gov

Weather observations for the past three days

Jacksonville, New River, Marine Corps Air Station

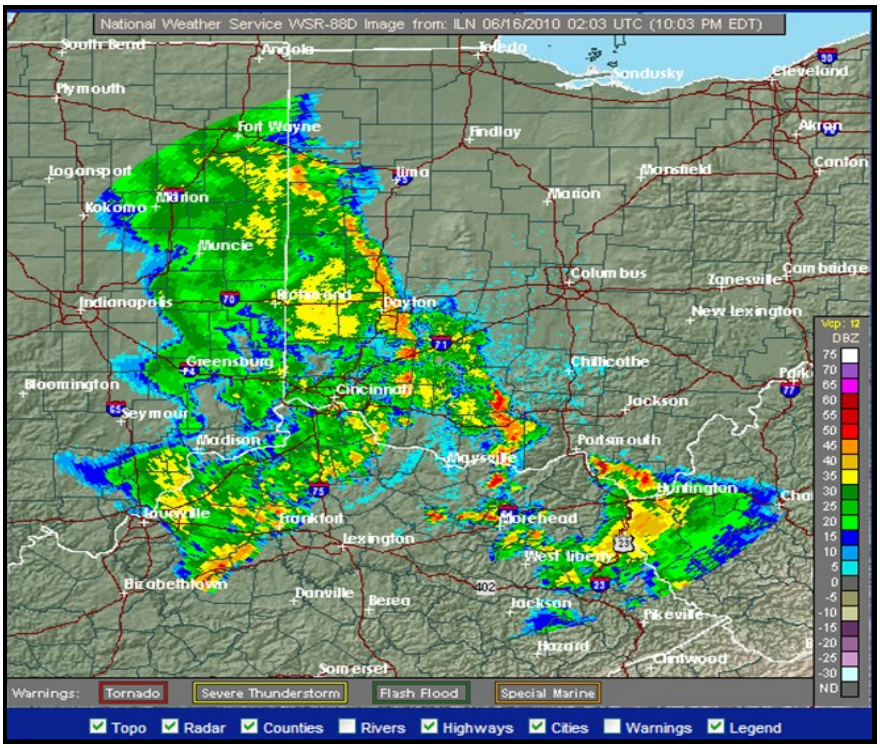
Enter Your "City, ST" or zip code Go en español

Date	Time (edt)	Wind (mph)	Vis. (mi.)	Weather	Sky Cond.	Temperature (°F) Air	Dwpt	6 hour Max.	6 hour Min.	Pressure altimeter (in.)	sea level (mb)	Precipitation (in.) 1 hr	3 hr	6 hr
15	20:56	E 12	10.00	A Few Clouds	FEW060	82	75			30.03	1017.1			
15	19:56	SE 9	10.00	Fair	CLR	84	77	99	84	30.01	1016.3			
15	18:56	SE 7	10.00	Fair	CLR	87	72			30.00	1016.0			
15	17:56	SE 6	10.00	Light Rain	BKN040 BKN080	86	73			29.99	1015.6			
15	16:56	SE 10	10.00	Mostly Cloudy	BKN065	94	74			29.98	1015.2			
15	15:56	S 9	10.00	Mostly Cloudy	BKN065	93	75			29.96	1014.8			
15	14:56	NW 6	10.00	A Few Clouds	FEW060	97	70			29.97	1015.1			
15	13:56	Calm	10.00	A Few Clouds	FEW050	96	71	96	78	29.98	1015.5			
15	12:56	Calm	10.00	Partly Cloudy	FEW025 SCT120	94	74			29.99	1015.7			
15	11:56	N 6	10.00	Partly Cloudy	SCT140	92	72			29.99	1015.8			
15	10:56	Calm	10.00	Mostly Cloudy	BKN140	86	73			29.99	1015.7			
15	09:56	W 6	10.00	Mostly Cloudy	SCT120 BKN200	82	73			29.98	1015.4			
15	08:56	NW 3	10.00	Fair	CLR	80	71			29.98	1015.2			
15	07:56	N 5	10.00	Partly Cloudy	SCT120	80	70	80	72	29.96	1014.8			
15	06:56	Calm	10.00	A Few Clouds	FEW120	74	70			29.95	1014.4			
15	05:56	Calm	10.00	Fair	CLR	72	70			29.94	1013.9			
15	04:56	W 3	10.00	Fair	CLR	73	69			29.93	1013.6			

Radar

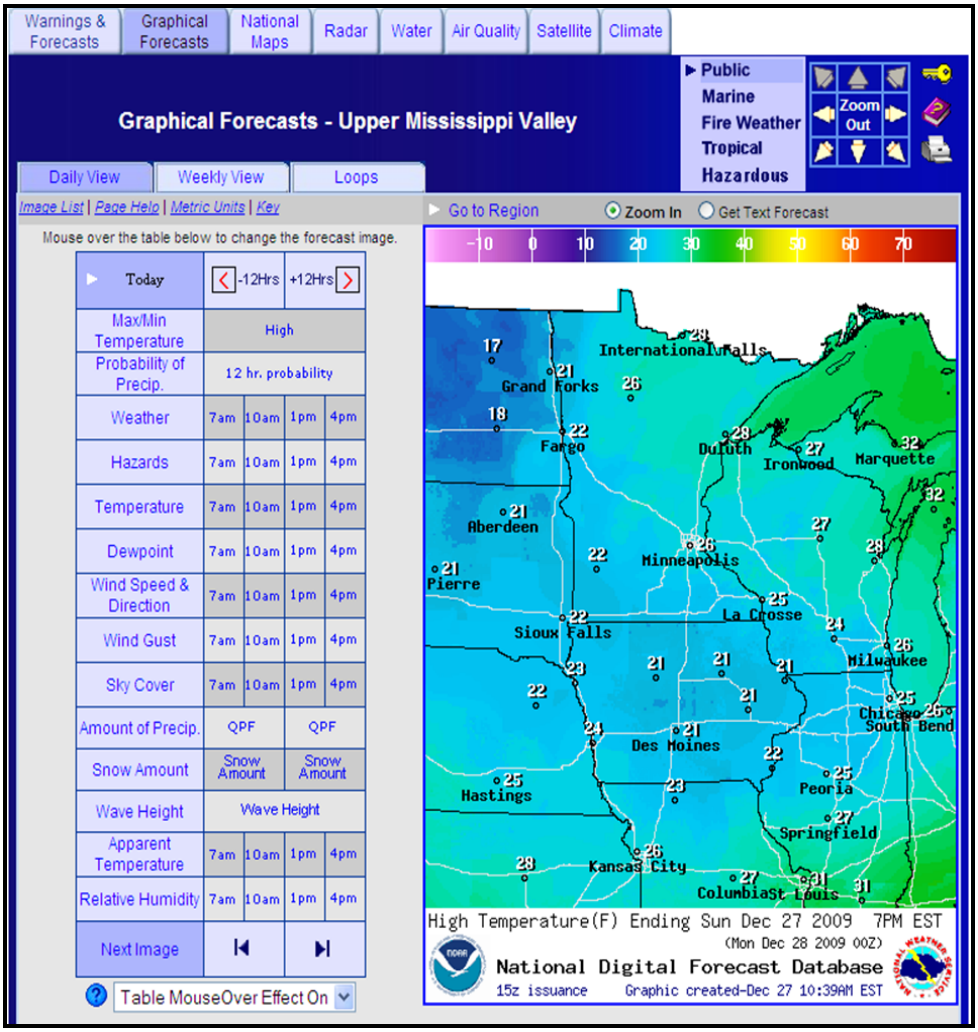
One of the most popular tools on NWS websites is the radar display. Clicking on the link will bring up a still image of base reflectivity. To loop this image, click on loop after Base under the Reflectivity heading in the menu to the left of the display. The loop is an animation of about one hour of radar images. While in loop mode, controls will be at the bottom of the image to start or stop the loop, set it to "rock" back and forth, or change the loop speed. The user can also step through the images, or omit certain images from the loop.

Also available from the menu bar on the left are velocity images and loops as well as 1-hour and storm total precipitation data. Links to other regional radar views are also located in this menu. At the top of the menu, using the arrows, the user can move quickly to adjacent radar sites.



The page also has options that can be toggled on and off, located at the bottom of the radar image. Terrain, counties and highways are a few of the features that can be turned on and off.

The radar image itself can appear different based on settings controlled at the local office. In particular, the radar may be set to "clear air mode" or one of a number of precipitation modes. Clear air mode is used when there is no precipitation, or when precipitation is light and reflectivity values are small. Drizzle or snow is frequently sampled better in a clear air mode. Besides the colors on the image, the other noticeable difference for most users is the frequency of samples. Image update frequency ranges from around 4 to around 10 minutes.



Graphical Forecasts

The National Digital Forecast Database graphical forecast is a tool that allows the user to quickly visualize the weather across the state or region, not just a single point. This view is very similar to what the forecaster sees as he or she is preparing the forecast. The view can be zoomed to a state view by clicking on the map.

Controls for this page are left of the map. The user will mouse over the forecast hour and parameter of interest. Near the top of the control panel, are arrows to move forward or back between forecast periods as well. Another viewing option is to use the weekly viewer from the tab near the top of the page, or the image loop.

Also, holding a mouse pointer over one of the forecast sample points on the map will bring up more detail for that specific point.

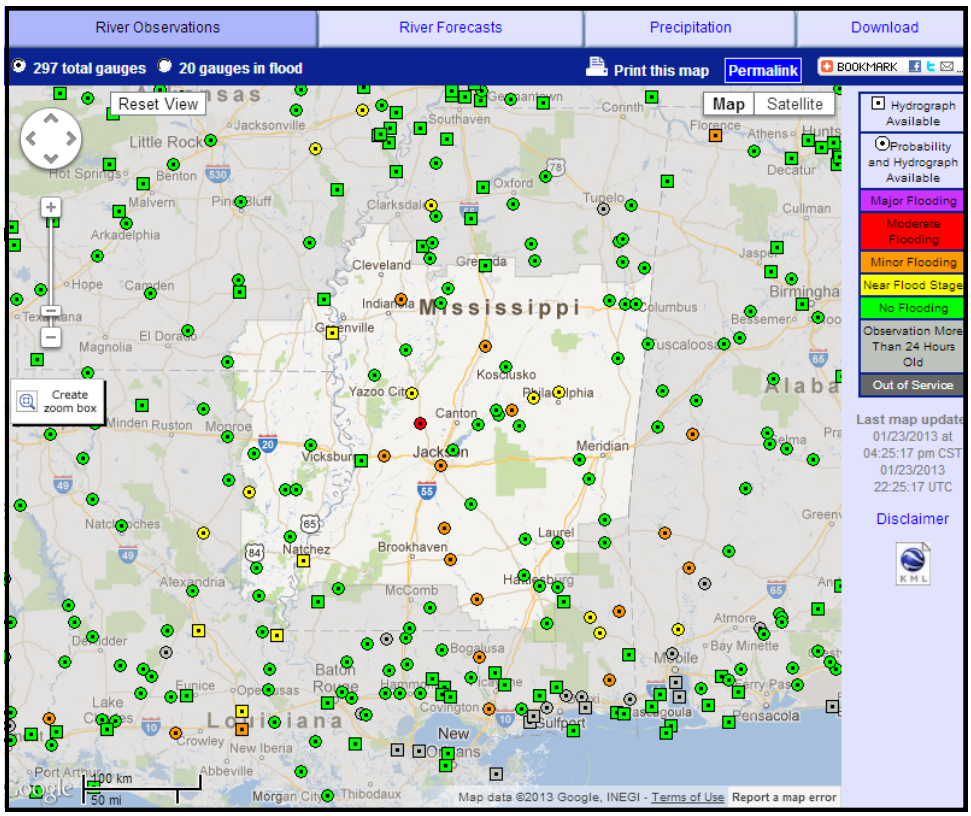
Area Forecast Discussion

The area forecast discussion or AFD is a fairly technical discussion designed to give some insight into what the challenges of the forecast were and share the thoughts of the forecaster as he or she was preparing the forecast.

Often, abbreviations or short-hand wording is used as well as technical terms and it can be difficult to read. To help, there is a glossary option at the top of the discussion page, that if turned on will highlight many of these abbreviations and technical terms. Clicking on the highlighted word will link to its definition.

Additionally, a short list of some of the more common abbreviations is Section 9 of this guidebook.

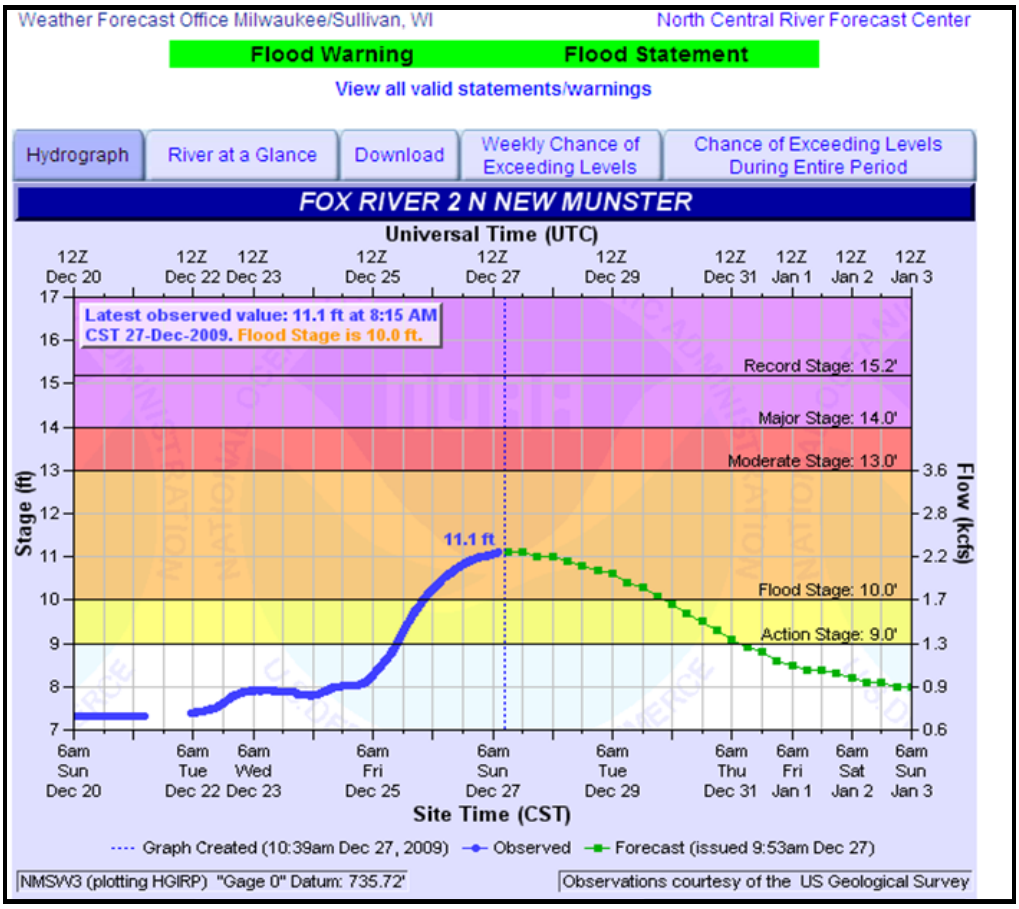
```
AREA FORECAST DISCUSSION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PHOENIX AZ
936 AM MST WED OCT 20 2010

.SYNOPSIS...
A SLOW MOVING LOW PRESSURE SYSTEM OVER ARIZONA AND SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA WILL LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN SHOWER AND THUNDERSTORM
CHANCES TODAY AND TONIGHT. BRIEF HEAVY RAIN...SMALL HAIL...AND
STRONG WINDS WILL BE POSSIBLE WITH THE THUNDERSTORMS. RAIN CHANCES
WILL DECREASE FROM WEST TO EAST ON THURSDAY AS THE SYSTEM MOVES
EASTWARD INTO NEW MEXICO. DRY CONDITIONS CAN BE EXPECTED FRIDAY
THROUGH TUESDAY. TEMPERATURES WILL BE WELL BELOW NORMAL TODAY AND
THURSDAY BEFORE A GRADUAL WARMING TREND TAKES PLACE FRIDAY THROUGH
EARLY NEXT WEEK.

&&

.DISCUSSION...
UPPER LEVEL LOW PRESSURE CENTERED OVER SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTINUES
TO BRING SCATTERED SHOWERS TO THE REGION THIS MORNING. THE AXIS OF
SHOWERS HAS BEEN PRIMARILY LOCATED FROM CASA GRANDE TO
WICKENBURG...WITH A SECONDARY AREA OF SHOWERS ACROSS NORTHERN LA PAZ
COUNTY. OTHERWISE CONDITIONS WERE MAINLY DRY UNDER CLOUDY SKIES.

FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE AFTERNOON HOURS...I EXPECT ADDITIONAL
SHOWERS TO DEVELOP AS THE CENTER OF THE UPPER LOW MOVES OVERHEAD AND
```



Rivers/Lakes

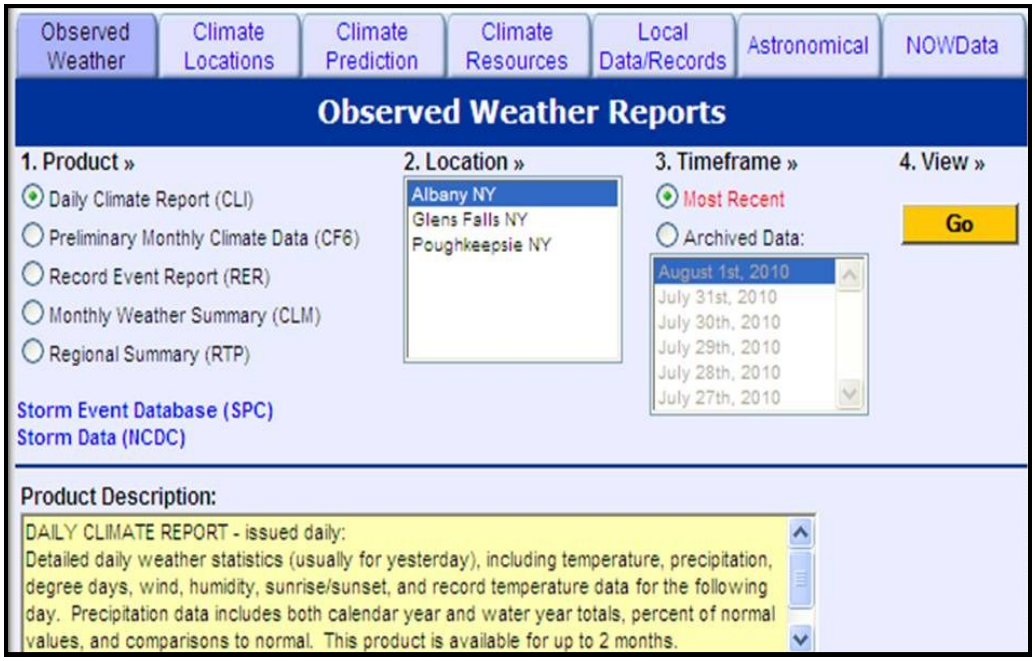
Hydrologic information is also available from our website. On the left hand blue menu of the main website, under the Hydrology header, select "Rivers and Lakes". The locations on this map are sites where a gauge is available to record data on the height of the water in the river or lake. These locations are color coded based on the current level of the river. Green points have no flooding; yellow locations are in the bank full or action stage. Orange, red or purple icons mean that this location is currently above flood stage and is experiencing minor, moderate or major flooding, respectively.

Clicking on one of the locations will bring up a graph of the past several days of river stage data. Also, if a forecast is currently being produced, green points will indicate the expected river levels for the coming days. The blue vertical line down the middle of this graph shows the current time. This webpage will also show the exact location of the gage, as well as historic records of high and low water levels.



Climate Information

The **climate section** of the NWS website provides a vast amount of information on historical weather conditions. This page is accessed from the forecast office home page, selecting the "Local" title under the Climate header. The observed weather section on the climate page provides detailed weather information for specific cities in the area. The Daily Climate Report is a breakdown of all weather conditions on a particular day, including temperatures, precipitation, wind information, heating/cooling degree days, as well as normal values and records. The Preliminary Monthly Climate Data product provides an overview for the entire month of the main weather parameters. This product also provides information on monthly departure from normal for temperature and precipitation. Additionally, from the climate page, the user can select the NOWData tab to access information from sites in the CWA that are not necessarily official climate reporting stations. These cites are most often information from cooperative observers. These observers are trained by the local office, and generally report data once per day. A variety of information is available for these locations.



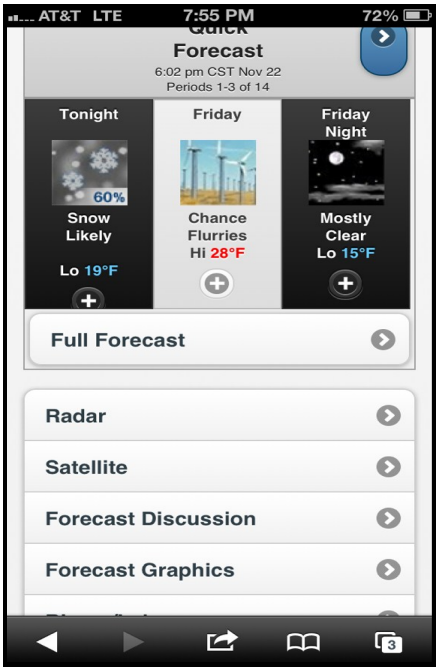
Other information from this page includes: links to climate prediction information, mostly from the Climate Prediction Center, astronomical data and a customized page of local information specific for each office.

Weather.gov Mobile Site

The weather.gov mobile site also has a lot of useful tools and information. Watches, Warnings or Advisories that are in affect for the location will be highlighted at the top of the screen followed by the current conditions and forecast for the next day.

Below the forecast can also be found radar, satellite, a forecast discussion, forecast graphics as well as other information.

mobile.weather.gov



The information provided in these pages is only a sample of all the information that can be found on any National Weather Service website. Additional information is available on all websites. Local offices also customize sections of the websites and have more information specific to the office.

Weather.gov Map Display Organization

The NWS issues a variety of non-routine weather messages to alert the general public of current or impending weather hazards. The NWS also relays, through its communication systems several non-weather-related emergency messages, such as one for 911 telephone outages. All of these messages are broken down into four main categories: warnings for life/property-threatening hazards, advisories for not life-threatening hazards, watches for favorable conditions which could lead to hazards and statements for follow-ups.

When a non-routine message has been generated for a location, the appropriate county or counties will be color-coded on the U.S. map on the main NWS page or on the county maps on WFO homepages. The names or types of non-routine messages currently in effect are listed below or to the right of the base-map. While there may be multiple products currently in effect for a single county, only one color can be displayed. For this reason, the products have been prioritized into the four categories listed above. It must be stressed that the layering priority does not reflect the NWS opinion of the exact local threat priority of each weather hazard. Any weather hazard, or non-weather hazard, can be just as deadly as any other depending on the circumstances. Below is the layering priority for display purposes only.

1	Tsunami Warning
2	Tornado Warning
3	Extreme Wind Warning
4	Severe Thunderstorm Warning
5	Flash Flood Warning
6	Shelter In Place Warning
6	Evacuation - Immediate
7	Civil Danger Warning
7	Nuclear Power Plant Warning
7	Radiological Hazard Warning
7	Hazardous Materials Warning
7	Fire Warning
7	Civil Emergency Message
8	Law Enforcement Warning
9	Hurricane Force Wind Warning
9	Inland Hurricane Warning
10	Hurricane Warning
10	Typhoon Warning
11	Special Marine Warning
11	Marine Weather Statement
12	Blizzard Warning
13	Ice Storm Warning
14	Inland Tropical Storm Warning
15	Heavy Snow Warning
16	Winter Storm Warning
17	High Wind Warning
18	Tropical Storm Warning
19	Storm Warning
20	Tsunami Watch
21	Avalanche Warning
22	Earthquake Warning
23	Volcano Warning
24	Coastal Flood Warning
25	Lakeshore Flood Warning
26	Flood Warning (areal)
27	Flood Warning (for forecast points)
28	High Surf Warning
29	Sleet Warning
30	Lake Effect Snow Warning
31	Excessive Heat Warning
32	Dust Storm Warning
33	PDS - Tornado Watch
34	Tornado Watch
35	PDS - Severe Thunderstorm Watch
36	Severe Thunderstorm Watch
37	Flash Flood Watch
38	Severe Weather Statement
39	Flash Flood Statement
40	Gale Warning
41	Flood Statement
42	Tsunami Advisory
43	Wind Chill Warning
44	Extreme Cold Warning
45	Hard Freeze Warning
46	Freeze Warning
47	Red Flag Warning
48	Hurricane Watch
48	Hurricane Watch
48	Typhoon Watch
48	Typhoon Watch
49	Hurricane Local Statement
49	Typhoon Local Statement
50	Snow and Blowing Snow Advisory
51	Freezing Rain Advisory
51	Freezing Drizzle Advisory
52	Sleet Advisory
53	Winter Weather Advisory
54	Lake Effect Snow and Blowing Snow Advisory
54	Lake Effect Snow Advisory
55	Wind Chill Advisory
56	Heat Advisory
57	Urban and Small Stream Flood Advisory
57	Small Stream Flood Advisory
57	Arroyo and Small Stream Flood Advisory
57	Flood Advisory
57	Hydrologic Advisory
58	Lakeshore Flood Advisory
58	Coastal Flood Advisory
59	Flood Advisory (for forecast points)
60	High Surf Advisory
61	Blowing Snow Advisory
62	Snow Advisory
63	Heavy Freezing Spray Warning
64	Dense Smoke Advisory
65	Small Craft Advisory For Hazardous Seas
65	Small Craft Advisory for Rough Bar
65	Small Craft Advisory for Winds
65	Small Craft Advisory
66	Brisk Wind Advisory
67	Hazardous Seas Warning
68	Dense Fog Advisory
69	Lake Wind Advisory
70	Wind Advisory
71	Blowing Dust Advisory
72	Frost Advisory
73	Ashfall Advisory
74	Freezing Fog Advisory
75	Freezing Spray Advisory
76	Air Stagnation Advisory
77	Low Water Advisory
78	Local Area Emergency
79	Avalanche Watch
80	Blizzard Watch
81	Inland Tropical Storm Watch
82	Tropical Storm Watch
82	Tropical Storm Watch
82	Inland Hurricane Watch
83	Winter Storm Watch
87	Coastal Flood Watch
84	Lakeshore Flood Watch
85	Flood Watch (for forecast points)
85	Flood Watch (areal)
86	High Wind Watch
87	Excessive Heat Watch
88	Extreme Cold Watch
89	Wind Chill Watch
90	Lake Effect Snow Watch
91	Freeze Watch
92	Fire Weather Watch
93	Extreme Fire Danger
94	Child Abduction Emergency
95	911 Telephone Outage
96	Coastal Flood Statement
97	Lakeshore Flood Statement
98	Special Weather Statement
99	Marine Weather Statement
100	Hazardous Weather Outlook
101	Short Term Forecast
102	Administrative Message
103	Test

For more information on the colors for each of these products, see:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/wwamap-prd/wwacolortab.php?x=1